

REMARKS

Claims 1-68 are currently pending in the application. Claims 28-66 are withdrawn. Claims 1, 23, and 26 are amended. The amendments find support in the specification and are discussed in the relevant sections below. No new matter is added.

The specification has been amended to delete the Abstract on page 976. The Abstract on page 201 is the correct Abstract.

Claim Objections

The Office Action states that claims 1-27, and 67-68 are objected to, because the recitation “a second amino acid sequence comprising a ligand for a cell surface polypeptide” is allegedly awkward. Applicants have amended the claims consistent with the language suggested in the Office action.

Rejection of Claims 6-14, 23, and 26 Under 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph

The Office Action states that claims 6-14, 23, and 26 are rejected for indefiniteness under 35 USC 112, second paragraph on the grounds that the recitation “at least about”, particularly the word “about”, renders the relevant claims indefinite. Applicants respectfully disagree. Nevertheless, in order to expedite prosecution, Applicants are herewith amending the claims to remove the word “about”.

Rejection of Claims 23 and 26 Under 35 U.S.C. §112, First Paragraph

The Office Action states that claims 23 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph on the grounds that they allegedly fail to comply with the written description requirement. The Office Action states that the limitation that the second amino acid sequence comprise at least five contiguous amino acids of a naturally occurring GM-CSF is directed at a genus, and further states that Applicants fail to provide adequate written description of the genus by providing sufficient description of a representative number of species. Applicants traverse the rejection.

First, Applicants note that they were in full possession of the claimed invention at the time the application was filed. The species described fully embodies all elements of the invention as claimed, and the specification therefore clearly conveys possession of the claimed invention to one skilled in the art. Applicants further note that the limitation regarding “at least five contiguous amino acids” is meant to exclude compositions failing to meet this standard, and that anyone reasonably skilled in the art could easily discern whether, on that basis, a given composition fell within or without the potential purview of the claims.

Applicants further note that there is extensive and well-known information in the literature regarding which amino acids of GM-CSF molecules are, respectively, necessary or dispensable for receptor binding and/or bioactivity. See, for example, Shanafelt et al., 1991, J. Biol. Chem. 266: 13804; Shanafelt and Kastelein, 1989, PNAS 86: 4872; Hercus et al., 1994, Blood 83:3500; Altman and Kastelein, 1995, J. Biol. Chem. 270: 2233; Monfardini et al., 1996, J. Biol. Chem. 271: 2966; Lopez et al., 1992 EMBO 11: 909; Meropol et al., 1992 J. Biol. Chem. 267: 14266; Schanafelt and Kastelein, 1992 J. Biol. Chem., 267: 25466; Seelig et al., 1994, J. Biol. Chem. 269: 5548; Shanafelt et al., 1991, EMBO 10: 4105 (Exhibits A-J, respectively). Thus, one skilled in the art would easily discern many members of a genus from the disclosures of the instant specification, and would recognize that the inventors were, correspondingly, in possession of many such members.

The Office Action acknowledges that adequate written description can rest on disclosure of relevant identifying characteristics, and sets forth a number of specific means by which this approach can be perfected. For example, the delineation of physical and/or chemical properties and functional characteristics can be sufficient to satisfy the written description requirement. Applicants agree that such criteria can fulfill the written description requirement. In fact, a key functional limitation is already present in the claims that derives from the description in the specification. That is, that the second amino acid sequence must be a ligand for a cell surface polypeptide chosen from the list iterated in claim 1. This clearly defines a genus to one skilled in the art, and indicates full possession of the claimed invention. To make this point clearer, Applicants have amended claims 23 and 26 to depend from claims 22 and 25, respectively.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that Examiner withdraw the rejection under 35 USC 112.

Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 4-8, 15, 16, and 18-21 Under 35 U.S.C. §102

The Office Action states that claims 1-2, 4-8, 15-16, and 18-21 are rejected under §102 for lack of novelty over Ramshaw et al., U.S. Pat. No. 5,866,131. The Office Action states that Ramshaw et al. teaches a fusion polypeptide comprising a first amino acid sequence that can bind to a carbohydrate binding domain [sic], and a second amino acid sequence that is a ligand for a cell surface polypeptide, particularly a cytokine receptor. The Office Action states further that the first amino acid sequence is the hemagglutinin protein, and that the second amino acid sequence includes the murine IL-2 protein, the murine TNF protein, and the murine IL-3 protein.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Ramshaw et al., in fact, does not teach a fusion polypeptide at all. Although this reference teaches nucleic acid constructs that encode multiple amino acid sequences, they are expressed as separate molecules, rather than as a fusion polypeptide. This is expressly evident from the drawings of Ramshaw et al, especially Figure 6a. Moreover, Ramshaw et al. clearly states at column 7, lines 6-8, that the hemagglutinin and cytokine were coexpressed from the viral constructs, “but from separate sites in the viral genome.” Thus, they are not combined in a fusion polypeptide.

In order to support a rejection under 35 USC 102, a reference must teach all elements of the claimed invention. Since a fusion polypeptide is an essential element of the claimed invention, and since Ramshaw et al fails to teach a fusion polypeptide, the ‘131 patent does not anticipate the instant claims.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Rejection of Claims 3, 9-14, 17, 22-27, and 67-68 Under 35 U.S.C. §103

The Office Action states that claim 3 is rejected under §103 as being obvious over Ramshaw et al, discussed above, in view of Meyers et al, U.S. Pat. No. 6,911,317. Applicants traverse the rejection.

As discussed above, Ramshaw et al. does not teach the fusion polypeptide recited in claim 1. There is no teaching in Meyers et al. to supplement the deficient teachings of Ramshaw et al. Accordingly, even if combined, the references cited to not teach each element of the claimed invention. Furthermore, given their widely disparate teachings, there would have been no motivation to combine these references, nor is it clear how they could be combined to yield the teachings of the instant invention.

The Office Action also states that claims 9-14 are rejected as being obvious over Ramshaw et al. in view of Fiers et al., U.S. PreGrant Pub No. 20030129197. Applicants traverse the rejection.

Again, as discussed above, Ramshaw et al. does not teach the fusion polypeptide recited in claim 1. There is no teaching in Fiers et al. to supplement the deficient teachings of Ramshaw et al. Accordingly, even if combined, the references cited to not teach each element of the claimed invention.

The Office Action also states that claim 17 is rejected as being obvious over Ramshaw et al., that claims 22-27 are rejected as being obvious over Ramshaw et al. in view of Wortham et al., and that claims 67-68 are rejected as being obvious over Ramshaw et al. in view of Natesan, U.S. Pat. No. 6,015,709. Applicants traverse the rejections.

In each case, as above, Ramshaw et al. does not teach the fusion polypeptide recited in claim 1, and the rejected claims each depend directly or indirectly from claim 1. There is no teaching in the secondary references to supplement the deficient teachings of Ramshaw et al. Accordingly, even if combined, the references cited to not teach each element of the claimed invention.

Accordingly, Applicants request that the rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn.

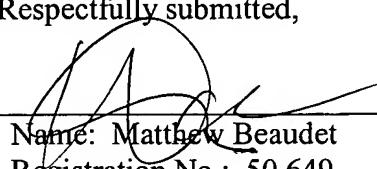
Double Patenting

The Office Action states that the instant claims are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness type double patenting in view of several co-pending applications. Upon notification of allowable subject matter in the instant case, Applicants will timely file a terminal disclaimer effective to obviate the double patenting rejection.

Applicants submit that all claims are allowable as written and respectfully request early favorable action by the Examiner. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conversation with Applicant's attorney/agent would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is cordially invited to call the undersigned attorney/agent of record.

Respectfully submitted,

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